

Message Text

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ACTION SY-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-05 ISO-00 /013 W
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R 050711Z APR 74
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3531

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 2577

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ASEC
SUBJECT: SMUGGLING CASE

DEPT FOR A/SY, NEA/TUR, NEA/EX ONLY

REF A) STATE 64893 (NOTAL) B) ANKARA 2419; C) ANKARA 2352

1. INTERVIEWS OF TEN USAID LOCAL EMPLOYEES AND REVIEW USAID FILES REFLECTS NO INFO WHICH WOULD CONFIRM THE ORDERING OR RECEIPT BY AID OF SUSPECT SHIPMENTS.
2. AT THIS POINT RSO INVESTIGATION WITHIN ANKARA MISSION HAS YIELDED CIRCUMSTANTIL EVIDENCE POINTING TO INVOLVEMENT OF ONE OR MORE LOCAL EMPLOYEES OF THE EMBASSY CUSTOMS UNIT: E.G., ACCESS OF TURKISH EMPLOYEES TO OFFICIAL EMBASSY RUBBER STAMP SEAL USED FOR AUTHENTICATING CUSTOMS DOCUMENTS; MISSING FILE COPIES OF SUCH DOCUMENTS RELATING TO A NUMBER OF SUSPICIOUS SHIPMENTS; TURKISH EMPLOYEE SIGNATURES AT CUSTOMS ON RECEIPTS FOR SHIPMENTS WHICHNEITHER ORDERED NOR RECEIVED BY US AGENCIES HERE. NEVERTHELESS, DESPITE THIS EVIDENCE TURKISH SUSPECTS DID NOT ADMIT GUILT DURING RSO INTERROGATION. EMBASSY INVESTIGATION HAS REVEALED NO INDICATION OF INVOLVEMENT OF AMERICAN PERSONNEL ALTHOUGH IT HAS DISCLOSED APPARENTLY LONG-STANDING DEFICIENCIES IN SUPERVISION OF SUSPECT TURKISH EMPLOYEES.

3. FOREIGN MINISTRY-CUSTOMS MINISTRY RESISTANCE TO EMBASSY PRESSURE FOR MEETING TO COORDINATE EMBASSY AND TURKISH INVESTIGATIONS FINALLY GAVE WAY APRIL 2 WHEN ALI CANTEZ, HEAD OF INSPECTION GROUP, CUSTOMS MINISTRY, MET WITH DCM SPAIN.

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SPAIN (A) PROVIDED PHOTOCOPY OF EMBASSY LOG BOOK IN WHICH ALL

CUSTOMS DOCUMENTS ISSUED ARE LISTED, (B) NOTED THAT IN ADDITION TO MARCH 22 WATCH SHIPMENT, EIGHT PREVIOUS SUSPICIOUS SHIPMENTS ON WHICH INFORMATION HAD BEEN PROVIDED TO THE EMBASSY BY LUFTHANSA HAD NEITHER BEEN ORDERED NOR RECEIVED BY EMBASSY, (C) EXPLAINED CUSTOMS HANDLING PROCEDURE AT EMBASSY, AND (D) REPORTED RESULTS INTERROGATION TURKISH EMPLOYEES EMBASSY CUSTOMS UNIT.

4. IN COURSE MEETING, EXPLANATION FOR APPARENT INITIAL MISHANDLING OF CASE BY GOT BECAME APPARENT. HEAD, INSPECTIONS, MIN OF CUSTOMS SAID THAT UPON RECEIPT OF EMBASSY AIDE MEMOIRE BY FONMIN LATE AFTER-NOON APRIL 2 PROTOCOL SECTION ATTEMPTED CONTACT HIM BUT HE WAS UNAVAILABLE. UNCONVINCED THAT HIS DEPUTY WOULD HANDLE "VERY SENSITIVE" MATTER ADEQUATELY, PROTOCOL THEN INFORMED FORMIN GUNES' OFFICE. STAFF AIDE RUSHED TO PARLIAMENT WHEN FONMIN WAS ATTENDING A MEETING. GUNES, PRESSING THE PANIC BUTTON, ALERTED CUSTOMS AND PERHAPS REGULAR POLICE AT AIRPORT. TWENTY TO THIRTY ARMED POLICE SURROUNDED THE AIRCRAFT UPON ITS ARRIVAL AND CONFISCATED THE WATCHES. THE MINISTRY OF CUSTOMS IS THROUGHLY UNHAPPY OVER THE CLUMSY HANDLING OF THE CASE BY THE FONMINISTRY AND POLICE WHICH ELIMINATED ANY CHANCE FOR CUSTOMS TO SURVEIL THE SHIPMENT AND ARREST THE RECIPIENTS.

5. CANTEZ (A) EXPRESSED GRATITUDE FOR EMBASSY COOPERATION, (B) PROMISED KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH AS HIS INVESTIGATION DEVELOPS, (C) ARRANGED MEETING LATER IN DAY WITH RSO, AND (D) SAID HE WOULD CONTACT ONLY SPAIN IF HE UNCOVERED EVIDENCE ANY INVOLVEMENT AMERICAN PERSONNEL (WHILE CANTEZ HIMSELF GAVE SPAIN NO INDICATIONS SUSPICION OF INVOLVEMENT AMERICAN PERSONNEL, IT SEEMS CLAR TO US FROM (A) FORMINISTRY INSISTANCE THAT MEETING WITH CANTEZ SHOULD BE BY SENIOR AMERICAN OFFICIAL NOT RPT NOT IN ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION, (B) FRAGMENTARY INFO ON TURKISH THINKING ON CASE ACQUIRED INDEPENDENTLY BY OTHER SECTIONS EMBASSY, AND (C) NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF CASE, THAT INITIALLY AT LEAST, TURKS SUSPICIOUS AMERICAN PERSONNEL ALSO INVOLVED.)

6. AS AGREED IN SPAIN-CANTEZ MEETING, RSO MET WITH CANTEZ AND CHIEF INSPECTOR DEMIRKOL AFTERNOON APRIL 2. RSO DISCUSSED ALL DETAILS OF CASE WITH CUSTOMS INSPECTOR INCLUDING INFORMATION CONTAINED IN ZURICH 0145 AND FRANKFURT 1860. CUSTOMS INSPECTOR FEELS EMBASSY LOCAL EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT

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IS PROBABLE BUT IS MORE INTERESTED IN IDENTITY AND ARREST OF "MASTERMIND" OF SMUGGLING OPERATION. FEELINGS OF BOTH EMBASSY AND CUSTOMS MINISTRY ARE THAT EMBASSY LOCALS MAY BE ONLY PAWNS IN OPERATION INVOLVING PROFESSIONAL SMUGGLERS. CUSTOMS INSPECTOR FEELS THAT EMBASSY LOCALS CAN GIVE VITAL INFORMATION REGARDING PERSONALITIES AND MODUS OPERANDI AND INTEND TO INTERROGATE EMBASSY LOCAL EMPLOYEES IN FUTURE. CUSTOMS VERY INTERESTED IN IDENTITY OF SHIPPERS OF CONTRABAND AND WERE PARTICULARLY EXCITED

OVER INFORMATION IN ZURICH 0145. RSO ADVISED THAT WE ALSO PASSED AWB AND CUSTOMS TRANSIT NUMBERS ON FIVE SUSPECT SHIPMENTS TO AMCONGEN FRANKFURT (ANKARA 2352). CUSTOMS VERY ANXIOUS TO KNOW RESULTS OF INQUIRIES GERMAN POLICE AND WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFO WE RECEIVE FROM FRANKFURT SOONEST. CUSTOMS DOES NOT INTEND INTERROGATE EMBASSY LOCAL EMPLOYEES PRIOR TO RECEIPT OF INFO FROM FRANKFURT. AFTER RECEIPT OF INFO THROUGH OUR CHANNELS, CUSTOMS INTENDS TO WRITE REQUEST FOR SAME INFO DIRECTLY TO GERMAN POLICE AUTHORITIES FOR USE IN PREPARING COURT CASE.

7. BY SEPTEL WE ARE ASKING CONGEN FRANKFURT ATTEMPT OBTAIN WHATEVER INFO AVAILABLE FROM GERMAN AUTHORITIES ON CASE AND ADVISE US. DUE TO IMMINENT PASSAGE OF TURKISH ANESTY BILL WHICH WILL AFFECT CRIMES COMMITTED PRIOR 1974. CUSTOMS INSPECTORS ARE CONCENTRATING ON TWO SUSPECT SHIPMENTS DURING 1974.
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